

August 22, 2013

Eliot Greenwald
Federal Communications Commission
Consumer & Governmental Affairs Bureau
445 12th Street, SW.
Room TW-A325
Washington, DC 20554.

Re: Request for Comments on Petition for Class Waiver of Commission's
Rules for Access to Advanced Communications Services and Equipment
by People With Disabilities

CG Docket No. 10-213

Dear Mr. Greenwald:

The following comments on the Petition for Class Waiver of Commission's Rules for Access to Advanced Communications Services And Equipment by People With Disabilities, as applied for by the Coalition of E-Reader Manufacturers, are submitted by Disability Rights New Jersey (DRNJ), the designated protection and advocacy system for individuals with disabilities in New Jersey, pursuant to the Developmental Disabilities Assistance and Bill of Rights Act of 2000, 42 U.S.C. §§ 5041 to 15045; the Protection and Advocacy for Mentally Ill Individuals Act, 42 U.S.C. §§ 10801 to 10807; the Client Assistance Program of the Rehabilitation Act, 29 U.S.C. § 732; the Protection and Advocacy for Individual Rights Program of the Rehabilitation Act, 29 U.S.C. § 794e; and the Technology Related Assistance for Individuals with Disabilities, 29 U.S.C. § 2201.

DRNJ appreciates the difficulties faced by Commission in developing regulations that ensure access for people with disabilities to a vast array of electronic devices providing advanced communications services (ACS). DRNJ also appreciates the concerns of the Coalition of E-Reader Manufacturers regarding the many differences between their products and desktop and tablet computers. There is a very high likelihood that people with disabilities will not be best served by a "one size fits all" approach to regulation that tries to apply one standard to several varied classes of devices. To that extent, the petition is, on its face, reasonable.

However, the Commission must also weigh this concern against the importance of accessible electronic text to people with disabilities, particularly people who are blind or

Eliot Greenwald
Page 2
August 22, 2013

who have learning disabilities. For such individuals, e-readers equipped with text-to-speech technology and/or audiobook playback are essential to their ability to access information, entertainment, and literature.

In this petition, the Commission is asked to provide a waiver from accessibility standards on behalf of large corporations who are seeking to deny a basic level of functionality for people who are blind or who have learning disabilities. The Commission should deny the waiver and require that e-reader manufacturers provide an adequate means for people with disabilities to use e-readers.

However, the Commission need not, and should not, have regulations that treat e-readers in the same manner as desktop computers, tablet computers, or smartphones. DRNJ recommends that the Commission create an interagency partnership with the United States Access Board, which has evaluated similar issues with respect to Section 508 compliance, and develop workable standards that ensure that people with disabilities have reasonable access to e-reader technology.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this process. DRNJ would welcome the opportunity to discuss these matters further.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'C. Edmonds', written over a horizontal line.

Curtis D. Edmonds
Managing Attorney